These initiatives are supported by other efforts made in the diplomatic and media spheres.

Stampede at Mandhar Devi Temple, Maharashtra

†831. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of people died in a stampede during annual worship function in Mandhar Devi temple in Satara district in Maharashtra recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have formulated any scheme to prevent recurrence of such accidents; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) The Government of Maharashtra has informed that 291 persons lost their lives and 98 sustained injuries during the stampede on 25.1.2005 at Mandhar Devi Temple. A large number of devotees had converged on 25.1.2005 at the temple to offer puja on the occasion of 'Shakambari Purinima'. A woman devotee carrying a basket slipped and the oil contained in her basket spilled on the approach path to the temple that was already slippery due to coconut water. This led to other devotees to slip and fall on her, resulting in the stampede.

(c) and (d) The Central Government has instructed ail States/UTs to take effective steps to manage the crowd during such religious festivals/ fairs. These measures may *inter-alia* include proper and adequate civic and other logistic arrangements, maintenance of law and order and security arrangements during such festivals.

Special assistance for tackling militancy in North-Eastern States

832. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give special assistance to upgrade and expand infrastructure to tackle the problem of militancy and insurgency in the North-Eastern States; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.